

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDE-00 ERDE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 TRSE-00 NSC-05 NRC-05 NASA-01 OES-07 /092 W

-----032140 011657Z /46

O R 011625Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 477

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

MBFR VIENNA 903

USMISSION USUN

DIA WASHDC

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USSALTTWO

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PARM MBFR SALT UR US

SUBJECT: TASS STATEMENT ON NEUTRON BOMB

SUMMARY: TASS STATEMENT JULY 31 SETS THE STAGE FOR THE NEUTRON

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BOMB ISSUE TO BECOME THE FOCUS OF SOVIET PRESS ATTACK ON

U.S. DEFENSE EFFORTS. IT SUGGESTS THE BOMB MAY AFFECT

SALT, BUT AVOIDS ANY REFERENCE TO MBFR. THE REASON FOR

THE MOVE TO THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE, AND THE MOVE AWAY FROM

THE CRUISE MISSILE CAMPAIGN, MAY BE LINKED TO THE

RELATIVELY STRONG RESPONSE WHICH THE FORMER HAS

RECEIVED IN THE WEST FROM GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO

ARE OPPOSED TO THE NEUTRON BOMB. END SUMMARY.

1. TASS JULY 31 PUBLISHED AN UNSIGNED "STATEMENT" (AND THEREFORE MORE AUTHORITATIVE THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS YET APPEARED) ON THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE. PRAVDA AND KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, DEFMIN ORGAN, PRINTED THE TEXT. IT REPRESENTS THE MOST DEFINITIVE STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET POSITION TO DATE ON THE MATTER AND APPEARS TO BE DESIGNED TO SET THE PARAMETERS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF A MAJOR SOVIET EFFORT, EVIDENT IN THE PRESS RECENTLY, TO MAKE THE ISSUE THE CENTERPIECE OF SOVIET CAMPAIGN TO PORTRAY THE U.S. DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MOST NEGATIVE TERMS.

2. THE TASS STATEMENT APPEARS TO BE MORE CAREFULLY WRITTEN THAN MUCH OF THE RECENT SOVIET COMMENTARY ON THE ISSUE. AS USUAL WITH SUCH STATEMENTS, IT CONTAINS A MIXTURE OF PURE PROPAGANDA POINTS WITH MORE SERIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE WEAPON. IN THIS STATEMENT, THE PROPAGANDA THEMES PREDOMINATE. THE FOLLOWING POINTS STRIKE US AS MOST SIGNIFICANT (ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS FULL FBIS TEXT):

--THE REJECTION OF THE WEAPON AS ONLY "TACTICAL" IS CONSISTENT WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOVIET EFFORT TO EMPHASIZE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NUCLEAR AND NON-NUCLEAR AND TO REJECT ANY ATTEMPT TO CLASSIFY NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS "TACTICAL." THEIR OBJECT HERE IS TO CAST DOUBT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF NEUTRON BOMBS BEING USED IN A CONTROLLED NUCLEAR CONFLICT WHICH WOULD BE LESS THAN A FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR.

--IN A CAREFULLY-WORDED, BUT VIELED, REFERENCE TO SALT, TASS FAILS TO STATE OPENLY THAT THE BOMB WILL DEFINITELY HURT THE TALKS, BUT CHOOSES INSTEAD TO IDENTIFY ITSELF WITH THOSE "SOBER-MINDED FIGURES" IN THE WEST WHO ARE "EXPRESSING ALARM" OVER THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES WHICH THE BOMB HAS FOR THE "ONGOING ARMS LIMITATION TALKS."

--THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO MBFR. RATHER TASS DEALS WITH THE QUESTION OF EUROPEAN DEPLOYMENT ONLY IN TERMS OF ITS NEGATIVE EFFECT ON DETENTE AND ITS "CONFLICT WITH" THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI.

--WITHOUT CLEARLY STATING WHY, TASS PROCLAIMS THATBD THE NEW BOMB WILL BE BAD FOR NON-PROLIFERATION. THIS MAY REFER TO REPORTS FROM THE U.S. THAT THE PRODUCTION

OF THE NEW BOMB (AND OTHER WEAPONS) WILL REQUIRE
INCREASED PRODUCTION OF PLUTONIUM WITH CONSEQUENT
NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME.

--TASS MAKES NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THE NEUTRON BOMB
AND CRUISE MISSILES, A LINK WHICH HAS BEEN
IMPRECISELY MADE IN MANY OTHER COMMENTARIES ON THE NEUTRON
BOMB.

--THE STATEMENT HOLDS UP FOR RIDICULE ANY ARGUMENT
WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB IS MORE "MORAL"
OR "HUMANE" BECAUSE IT LIMITS THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE WHILE
KILLING MASSES OF HUMANS.

3. THE REASON FOR THIS TASS STATEMENT AT THIS
POINT SEEMS TO BE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO
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MAKE THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE THE CENTERPIECE OF
THEIR PRESS CAMPAIGN OF THE "TERRIBLE NEW WEAPONS"
WHICH THE U.S. IS DEVELOPING. THIS ISSUE APPEARS TO
HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BECAUSE OF THE FAILURE OF THE EFFORT
TO GAIN SUPPORT OUTSIDE THE BLOC FOR THEIR ANTI-CRUISE
MISSILE CAMPAIGN. THE SOVIETS MUST HAVE NOTICED THAT
OPPOSITION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB IS FINDING SOME
RESONANCE IN THE WEST AND THEY WANT TO USE THIS TO
THEIR ADVANTAGE.
TOON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MISSILES, NUCLEAR BOMBS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW11063
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770275-0213
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW USSALTTWO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197708110/aaaadqdf.tel
Line Count: 146
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1434690
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TASS STATEMENT ON NEUTRON BOMB SUMMARY: TASS STATEMENT JULY 31 SETS THE STAGE FOR THE NEUTRON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
TAGS: PARM, UR, US, MBFR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4c162250-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009